THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) At present, there are no plans to produce Bofors guns indigenously.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Production of lethal munitions by private sector

777. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved production of certain lethal munitions in private sector;

(b) if so, details of the munitions in which private production has been allowed; and

(c) fresh steps taken to frame safeguards to prevent their falling in wrong hands keeping in view deteriorating security situation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) In May, 2001 Defence industry, which was hitherto reserved for public sector has been opened for Indian Private Sector participation upto 100% with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), permissible up to 26%, both subject to licensing. The Indian Private Sector can now manufacture all types of defence equipment under license. Till date 6 letters of intent have been issued to entrepreneurs in private sector to manufacture various types of defence equipment.

(c) Guidelines have been issued by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion in January, 2002 in consultation with the Ministry of Defence regarding the modalities for consideration of applications of Private entrepreneurs for grant of license. To prevent misuse by rogue elements, the Government have incorporated appropriate safeguards in the guidelines for issue of license.

Shrinking size of IAF

778. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our Air Force has lost 110 MIG-21 s during

last decade, while it acquired only 54 fighters (16 MIG-29/38 Sukhoi-300) during this period;

(b) if so, reasons for rapidly shrinking size of IAF; and

(c) Fresh steps taken by Government to fulfil the urgent demand of 130 Mirage-2000V of IAF in order to retain its fighting capabilities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Necessary steps are constanly taken to ensure and upgrade the fighting capabilities of Indian Air Force.

MIG aircrafts crash in 2003

†779. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of MIG aircrafts which crashed during the year 2002-03;

(b) whether technical faults are the cause of crashing of these aircrafts and whether any scheme is being formulated for modernisation of the aircrafts; if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the Committee on Defence had recommended for withdrawal of these aircrafts from the fleet of Air Force; if so, what action has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) 15 (fifteen).

(b) Technical Defect (TD), Human Error (HE) and various other factors cause accidents.

Modernisation and upgradation of Indian Air Force fleet is a continuous process.

(c) No, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.